

## Reflection on Teacher Website- August 2010

As part of the technology initiative at my school, each teacher is required to build and maintain a webpage. The webpage is simple and provides parents with a calendar of events as well as documents from their student's class that they can download if necessary. My webpage is quite simple. It contains my name, picture, and contact information. Since I am a speech pathologist, I do not have many documents to put on the page that parents would know how to use without instruction. When a parent wants more speech homework or information for his/her child, I develop the homework based on the needs of the individual student and then either write a note or call the parent to let them know how to use the information I have provided.

Putting my teacher page together was an interesting experience. Each teacher is required to follow the template provided by the district to ensure uniformity. Teachers were not allowed to express their individual styles on the page past the color and type of font used for the contact information. Although this makes the school website look more uniform and orderly, each teacher page was boring to build and boring to use. I think teachers would be more interested in building a teacher webpage and maintaining it throughout the year if they were able to personalize it more. It seems as though personalization of the page would give teachers more ownership and interest in the project. When discussing the teacher websites with other teachers, they appeared to be bored with the whole activity and did it just to be in compliance. For a web page to be successful, Kaiser (2006) states that it must make a strong first impression, catch the users' attention, and be creative. Unfortunately, our teacher pages do not meet these simple indicators.

The school principal and district technology leaders in charge of teacher webpages should meet with teachers and conduct an evaluation of this requirement. I feel that teacher webpages can and should be much more exciting and helpful to both teachers and parents. Leaders might even considering including basic Web 2.0 tools on the teacher websites to improve and simplify communications between teachers and parents. Solomon & Schrum (2007) discuss many great Web 2.0 tools that can be used including blogs, wikis, and podcasts.

This activity helped me to meet the standard relating to applying technology to enhance and improve personal productivity and professional practice (Williamson & Redish, 2009).

## References

- Kaiser, S. (2006). *Deliver first class web sites: 101 essential checklists*. Collingwood, VIC, Australia: Sitepoint.
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